

State of Connecticut Select Committee on Children

Testimony of Camila Laurindo

Honorable Committee Co-chairs and Committee Members

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Camila Laurindo, and I'm a Masters of Social Work student at the University Of Connecticut School Of Social Work. I am here today to testify on raised Senate Bill number 273, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CARE-4-KIDS PROGRAM. I support this legislation and I hope that you will support it as well.

High child care costs are seen as one of the biggest obstacles to securing employment for single mothers. Care 4 Kids is a very important program that addresses this need. But it currently does not accommodate all parents in need of affordable child care in Connecticut, such as minor parents in high school, mothers on maternity leave, and parents who have lost their employment, as described in the text of this bill.

Throughout my career as a student and as a social worker I have come across young mothers who have had to deal with the very difficult task that is to raise their children while attempting to complete high school. Many have had to drop out of school in order to care for their children, since their parents or other relatives had to work. Dropping out of school significantly decreases a young mother's chances to secure a job with a livable wage, creating more barriers to success and contributing to a cycle of poverty.

On a more personal note, I have close friends who had to drop-out of high school to care for their children because they could not afford child care and their mothers could not afford not to work. These friends continue to struggle in getting jobs that provide a livable wage, while providing reliable child care for their kids.

Passing this legislation will mean giving a chance to teen moms to be able to complete high school without compromise, among other significant improvements to a program that is much needed and not widely available. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Camila Laurindo
University of Connecticut School of Social Work